

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY BOARD

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In the matter of: :  
: :  
THE INVESTIGATION OF THE :  
CAPSIZING OF THE WATER TAXI : Docket No:  
LADY D IN BALTIMORE HARBOR, : DCA04MM015  
MARYLAND :  
ON MARCH 6, 2004 :  
: :  
INTERVIEW OF: :  
: :  
BM2 BRIAN CREST :  
US COAST GUARD :  
CURTIS BAY :  
: :  
- - - - -x

NTSB  
Office of Marine Safety  
MS-10  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East SW  
Washington, DC 20594  
Wednesday, March 10, 2004

The above captioned interview convened, upon agreement  
of the parties at 1:35 p.m.

BEFORE:

Mariette Burer  
National Transportation Safety Board

P R O C E E D I N G S

1:35 p.m.

MS. BURER: This is Mariette Burer with the  
NTSB and it is 1:35. To my left is -

LT. BARANOWSKI: Lieutenant Scott Baranowski,  
Sector Baltimore, US Coast Guard.

MS. BURER: Okay, will you identify yourself?

BM2 CHREST: I am BM2 Brian Chrest, Coast  
Guard Station, Curtis Bay.

MS. BURER: How do you spell your last name?

BM2 CREST: C-H-R-E-S-T.

MS. BURER: Okay. What I would like to know  
is just a little bit of your educational background.

BM2 CHREST: Okay, I have some college. Been  
in the Coast Guard a total of three years, well, almost  
three years. I was in Key West, Florida, for two of  
those years and I transferred here last July, so this  
summer will be my first year. I did search and rescue  
and ... in Florida.

MS. BURER: How long did you do search and  
rescue?

BM2 CHREST: Two years in Florida and about  
nine months here.

MS. BURER: Okay. What I would like to do  
is, as far as your experience - well, yes, you covered  
that -- three years. What I would like to do is for  
you to take it when - your day, and your day actually

1 started Saturday morning. What time did you wake up,  
2 and what time did you arrive to work and what you ended  
3 up doing, and then ...

4 BM2 CHREST: Okay. My role at the station,  
5 I'm a break-in coxun, coxun-in-training. Petty Officer  
6 Namlet's the coxun, I'm in the training for his level.  
7 At five a.m., I believe it was that day, we got  
8 underway to go to Havre de Grace for on a bridge patrol  
9 and it was low visibility. Got back at around ten in  
10 the morning. Like Petty Officer Namlet said, we have a  
11 standard of about eight hours in a day. I already had  
12 five of those hours, plus I'm since I'm not qualified,  
13 I don't have to - they can ... me all they want, I'm  
14 not really one of the key players on the boat crews.

15 So we got back around ten in the morning and  
16 then we did some work around the station, and around  
17 the four o'clock hour in the afternoon, I'm not really  
18 sure as to times, we were out in there, what we call  
19 the 'bosun's hold' - it's nothing more than a shed down  
20 by the water where the ... department does a lot of  
21 their work. I was down there with most of the people  
22 who ended up getting underway.

23 Petty Officer Wasson (ph), who was a coxun,  
24 that's the guy that's sick that's not here today, he  
25 was down there with us. Who else? McCollum was down  
26 there, some other people, and that's when the alarm  
27 went off. And those guys went running up there. I

1 stood back for a few extra minutes to kind of secure  
2 every thing up, because like Petty Officer McCollum  
3 said, we just had a storm. I didn't want to leave  
4 anything open in the rain.

5           So when I got up to the watch room, I just  
6 kind of, really all I wanted was a weapon when he said  
7 multiple people in the water, inner harbor. And I went  
8 and got my dive suit on as quick as possible, and then  
9 we went out and myself and five other people got  
10 underway on Coast Guard 2D272005, that's our - one of  
11 our quick response boats. That was the quickest I ever  
12 got dressed and quickest we ever we got underway and  
13 I'd ever got on scene anywhere.

14           When I got on scene, I decided - the first  
15 thing I saw in the water was life jackets floating  
16 around. And where this was - this was inside the  
17 harbor, and by that I mean if you draw an imaginary  
18 line from Lazaretto (ph) Point over to Fort McHenry, it  
19 was in shoreward of that line. And on scene was the  
20 big fire boat - I'm not sure what it's called - Mayor  
21 something - they were on scene and I think I remember  
22 seeing one of the fire boats, either fire boat one or  
23 fire boat two. They were on scene as well. There was  
24 a pleasure craft - I think it was called Tuglett, that  
25 was on scene. And oh, the Naval landing craft was on  
26 scene.

27           For the first, gosh, at least 20 minutes, we  
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1 were just kind of running around gathering  
2 information. We still had no idea how many people we  
3 were dealing with. They didn't know if it was four  
4 people, six people, or 50 people.

5           At this time, my role was - I was just kind  
6 of sitting in the pilot house with the coxun. I was  
7 handling some radio traffic when he was on the cell  
8 phone, handling the cell phone when he was on the  
9 radio. Had pen and pencil ready to take down  
10 information if it were - were given.

11           The landing craft appeared to have most of  
12 the people. Our initial thing is obviously, if there  
13 are any people in the water, let's find them. But it  
14 appeared that the Naval landing craft and the fire boat  
15 had already gotten them out. I'm not sure that the  
16 fire boat had gotten anybody out or not.

17           So I can tell you that for at least about the  
18 first 20 minutes we were just trying to gather  
19 information. We were pulling alongside this boat,  
20 pulling alongside that boat, finding out what you know.  
21 They're like, we ... they were prioritizing and kind of  
22 putting us down on the list, and we were prioritizing  
23 the people on the telephone. It was kind of a little  
24 crazy.

25           Back to the life jackets in the water. It  
26 was about - like I said, I'm not really sure on the  
27 time, but the - Petty Officer Mamowitz (ph) and Petty

1 Officer McCollum, their boat eventually got on scene  
2 and I will say that by the time - some time had elapsed  
3 and when they were up at the debris field, it had  
4 drifted around the corner of Lazaretto (ph) Point and I  
5 think this is significant, because I remember Petty  
6 Officer Mamowitz, right about the time when he was on  
7 scene of the debris field with the water taxi who was  
8 retrieving them, he had called in by radio to Sector  
9 Baltimore and reported that the winds were now  
10 sustained 20 to 30 knots, which was different up in the  
11 harbor. And I know that that's something Sector  
12 Baltimore SMC - the ... Coordinator would be interested  
13 in that. That's on his check list of things.

14           And he also said, "Stand by for some second  
15 drift information." I don't remember what the  
16 direction was, but I do remember he passed over the  
17 radio that the drift was 2.2 knots, which is pretty -  
18 pretty fast for current. And then he passed over ...  
19 he was going to start and do his expanding square.

20           At this time some helicopters were starting  
21 to get on scene, there was a lot of radio traffic, and  
22 we were still trying to get the initial amount, trying  
23 to confirm how many people were on board that taxi that  
24 we were dealing with.

25           And then as it went through the night, there  
26 was a Coast Guard helicopter on scene along with some  
27 other aircraft on scene. I know that the 272005 - we

1 did what's called a "creep search pattern" starting at  
2 the NH buoy and just going shoreline to shoreline and I  
3 can't remember what the track spacing was, but I  
4 remember I plotted it out on my chart. I'm ... that's  
5 one of the things I have to do is to plot it, so I  
6 plotted it out on the chart, and it was pretty  
7 extensive. But it was shoreline to shoreline from  
8 pretty much the NH buoy - I can't remember if it was to  
9 the Key Bridge or where - Petty Officer Mamowitz had  
10 the debris field from where he started his search.

11           And then later on that night, another Coast  
12 Guard asset from our station got underway. It was  
13 Coast Guard 41359, the coxun was actually our Officer-  
14 in-charge, and the engineer on board was an - our ETO.  
15 So they were recalling units on the command ...

16           And we got back around midnight. Petty  
17 Officer Mamowitz actually went back, brought some food  
18 out to us. We actually passed over the radio, a search  
19 pattern to run and - kind of interesting because that  
20 search pattern was not around ... Creek, but the other  
21 side of the Key Bridge, and it was kind of from ...  
22 Creek, across the brook and channel to ... Point,  
23 covering that area. We - I had it set up, but we never  
24 ran it. We were tasked to return to base with the  
25 intention of getting underway the next morning.

26           Some things were - a schedule was being made  
27 for us. Our operations - pardon me, our OPS boss, DM1

1 Dekeman (ph) - he was back at the station, getting the  
2 schedule ready of who was going to do what, where,  
3 throughout the night, and who was going to get back  
4 underway in the morning, things of that nature.

5 And that brings me to about midnight of that  
6 day. We got back around midnight.

7 MS. BURER: Okay. Is that the Coast Guard  
8 272005 -- is that the number?

9 BM2 CHREST: Yes.

10 MS. BURER: Okay, and you had approximately  
11 six people?

12 BM2 CHREST: We had six people.

13 MS. BURER: On board, including yourself.

14 BM2 CHREST: Uh-huh (yes.)

15 MS. BURER: And estimate what time you  
16 arrived on the scene.

17 BM2 CHREST: Oh, gosh, I really can't,  
18 honestly. I didn't know what time it was when the SAR  
19 alarm rang -

20 MS. BURER: Okay.

21 BM2 CHREST: Petty Officer McCollum says we  
22 were underway within eight minutes, and we were on  
23 scene within about ten minutes, but I really don't have  
24 a ... start numbers. I think it was some time around  
25 the four o'clock hour, that's the only thing I can say.

26 MS. BURER: This information - I think that's  
27 with the log, right?



1 BM2 CHREST: Yes.

2 MS. BURER: Okay. All right. So when you  
3 arrived on the scene, what you saw was the Naval  
4 landing craft, the big fire boat, either fire boat one  
5 or two, and the pleasure craft, right?

6 BM2 CHREST: Yes.

7 MS. BURER: Okay.

8 BM2 CHREST: The first thing I saw was a lot  
9 of life jackets in the water -

10 MS. BURER: Right.

11 BM2 CHREST: -- and then those were the boats  
12 that I saw on scene.

13 MS. BURER: Okay, and where was the pontoon  
14 with the Naval landing craft?

15 BM2 CHREST: It was alongside the big fire  
16 boat which was kind of just a little bit north of  
17 Lazaretto Point. It was kind of on this side of the  
18 harbor, right around that area. And I saw the beam of  
19 the fire boat, next thing in was the - the overturned  
20 craft, and then it was a lot of lifejackets in the  
21 water, that way.

22 MS. BURER: Okay.

23 BM2 CHREST: And as I said, everytime it  
24 drifted out here - the winds in here weren't as severe  
25 as the winds out here. This piece of land provides a  
26 little bit of - I think he said it was coming out of  
27 the northwest, and I remember reporting on some weather

1 to our watch and I think I gave him a rough estimate  
2 of 15 to 20 knots, which is pretty windy for in here.  
3 And then it was - when Petty Officer Mamowitz was out  
4 here, he reported it was like winds picked up out here,  
5 it's 20 to 30 sustained. I think that's pretty  
6 significant when we're talking about preparing to do a  
7 search for something. I think that was since they  
8 passed us a search to do on the other side of the Key  
9 Bridge.

10 MS. BURER: Right. You mentioned something  
11 about drifting around Lazaretto Point? What was that?

12 BM2 CHREST: That was the debris field. That  
13 was the life jackets.

14 MS. BURER: Okay.

15 BM2 CHREST: As I said, on scene, that's  
16 where I saw it, and eventually when Petty Officer  
17 Mamowitz, when he got on scene with the other water  
18 taxi picking up the life jackets, it was - it had  
19 drifted around this corner, the way the winds were  
20 about ten knots - ten knots more.

21 MS. BURER: Okay. How long were you on scene  
22 before the helicopters came?

23 BM2 CHREST: Gosh, I really - I can only give  
24 you an estimate, and it's not that great, probably  
25 about an hour, maybe two hours. I just can remember  
26 doing our search - our creep search through the night  
27 and that's about when the Coast Guard arrived on scene.

1 It was after sunset when they arrived on scene, but I  
2 think there were some other aircraft in the area. I  
3 really don't remember.

4 MS. BURER: And how long did it take for the  
5 other Coast Guard rescue boat to come? After you guys  
6 were there?

7 BM2 CHREST: Less than an hour. Maybe 35  
8 minutes. They were there pretty quick too.

9 MS. BURER: And is that the same class of ...

10 BM2 CHREST: Yes, they were all crew-

11 MS. BURER: And what number was that again?

12 BM2 CHREST: That was CD212047.

13 MS. BURER: Okay. I don't have any questions  
14 for right now.

15 LT. BARANOWSKI: Lieutenant Baranowski, Coast  
16 Guard. What was your position on the vessel again?

17 BM2 CHREST: I'm a break-in coxun, and I'm  
18 just kind of doing a couple things, I was obviously  
19 search, and I was also kind of watch the coxun and see  
20 what he's doing.

21 LT. BARANOWSKI: When you first arrived on  
22 scene you said you saw the capsized taxi right near the  
23 fire boat. What was - what was going on in that time  
24 period with that - could you see between the boat and  
25 the taxi?

26 BM2 CHREST: I really kind of - we couldn't  
27 really see it. I was more focused on the debris field

1 and I was kind of looking around at the - to see what  
2 was what, where the people were - they were on the  
3 Naval landing craft, and I think some of them were on  
4 fireboat one. They did the part at the scene to take  
5 people to shore. And ... still trying to get the  
6 information, but as far as that overturned vessel,  
7 there were some men on that and they were just kind of  
8 having it alongside and I really didn't know what they  
9 were doing. I was just kind of focused on people in  
10 the water.

11 LT. BARANOWSKI: No further questions.

12 MS. BURER: Were there people in the water  
13 when you arrived on scene?

14 BM2 CHREST: If there were, they were  
15 retrieved pretty quickly by other agencies.

16 MS. BURER: But did you actually see them -

17 BM2 CHREST: No, I didn't see any. The very,  
18 very first thing I saw was that debris there, the life  
19 - numerous - ten to 15, maybe more life jackets in the  
20 water.

21 MS. BURER: Okay, thank you. Would you just  
22 acknowledge that this has been taped?

23 BM2 CHREST: Sure, my name is BM2 Chrest,  
24 station Curtis Bay, I acknowledge this conversation is  
25 recorded.

26 MS. BURER: Thank you.

27 BM2 CHREST: You're welcome.

1                   (Whereupon, the interview in the above  
2 caption matter was concluded.)  
3